

I'd like to thank Peter. His kind introduction of me seemed to omit no major fact from my biography other than that I was born by Caesarean Section. This is of no significance in my life except that it has left an occasional tendency to leave buildings by the window rather than the door.

It's 9.30pm. I've had (unlike you) one drink and am quite sober. This means little elsewhere but says a lot about Edinburgh hospitality. It's my job to offer you all some advice, which, because it's free, will be short. I've spent several sleepless afternoons worrying about this because I come to this topic with a mind uncluttered by any knowledge of the subject - indeed I'm as informed as a newt.

In my case its nice to get to the stage where you're asked to do the after-dinner talk since all you're required to do is to plagiarise a few old jokes and not keep everyone from the bar for too long. Lest you misunderstand that's a paraphrase of the old Scots lament that they talk of my drinking but never my thirst. I hate to advocate alcohol, drugs, violence or insanity to anyone -

but they always worked for me. Not that I need drugs anymore, at my age you get the same rush from standing up very quickly.

Anyway I know that this is a cosmopolitan international conference but I understand that some of you here may not be too familiar with the University of Strathclyde, my home institution so I thought I'd just give you a two minute history of the University for those of you from Edinburgh, not least since tomorrow morning's excellent programme is dominated by folk from Strathclyde.

Strathclyde is a new University by Scottish standards having existed in only four centuries and two millennia. We were founded in 1796, some 20 years after the Declaration of Independence of the Thirteen Colonies - a title not to be shortened lest Scotland has to take the US to court with WIPO, since we invented Declarations of Independence, but regrettably in 1320 setting up a copyright office wasn't high on the list of priorities for Robert the Bruce.

While I remember I'd like to offer the traditional welcome to our American colleagues. Today is the 39th anniversary of the closing of the prison at Alcatraz. It's nice to see that so many of you have done something with your lives since then. But really I want to welcome you to Scotland. There are three types of people in the world: those who are Scots, those who want to be Scots and others with no ambition.

But back to Strathclyde. We were founded as the place of useful learning, not to be confused with the place of useless learning, otherwise known as the University of Glasgow. One of our first staff members was James Watt, who invented the steam engine, which led to factories, the industrial revolution, environmental pollution and global warming. In the nineteenth century our most famous graduate was David Livingstone, explorer and missionary and one of the fathers of the British Empire. Which has led to almost every war in the last 150 years from the Malvinas to Iraq. And can I just remind our American colleagues that they may now have a bigger army, but we've still invaded Iraq four times to your three in the last hundred years. Moving

swiftly on to the first half of the twentieth century, our most famous member of staff was John Logie Baird, inventor of television which has enriched our culture with everything from Jerry Springer to the Big Brother House. In the second half of the twentieth century when Strathclyde was re-founded as a university our first Principal was Sir Sam Curran, a member of the Manhattan Project team which invented the atomic bomb, leading to Hiroshima, Nagasaki, Three Mile Island and Chernobyl. Finally and just on the cusp of the new century our richest but least known graduate is a guy called Arthur Van Hoff from California. He was one of the five man team who invented Javascript, thereby leading to all those nice pop-up windows we get on our computers. In other words, although you know little of my university, we have contributed more to the sum of human misery than all the institutions represented in this room. And my remarks will continue that theme.

I'm one of the management team at Strathclyde. My official role is that of Pro-Vice Janitor, because I get to sweep up all the rubbish everyone else leaves behind. Our management team is

known as Wurlitzer. This refers to a collection of tubes of various shapes and sizes which make all sorts of queer noises but only in response to the commands of a remote operator. Appropriately enough they are only called on to work at periodic intervals and spend most of the time being on display and doing nothing!

I still have the Christmas cracker motto from our management team lunch. It said: If ignorance is bliss, why aren't more vice-chancellor's happy? Of course universities are not like they were when I was a student, although a Director of Finance still remains the only person in the university who can go straight from an unwarranted assumption to a pre-conceived conclusion. No they have become much more democratic. These days anyone can become a pro-vice chancellor - but hey that's one of the risks you take. Suppose you were an idiot and suppose you were a Head of Department - but then I repeat myself. And you can't get the staff. Several of my staff have had near death experiences. They survived them - but my aim is improving. Its called targeted staff reductions

But what of your conference theme, Evidence and Enlightenment. Until recently I thought that IT enlightenment was making sure you knew the phone number of your software supplier. But I know there are real problems. Not least because knowledge is growing at a faster rate than even the global birth rate, which may explain why there are so many half wits and why Maths illiteracy affects eight out of every five people. But there should be no need to worry about the demands put on data libraries; we have the collective brainpower to cope with this. The brain is a wonderful organ. It starts working smoothly as soon as you get up in the morning and doesn't stop until you get to the office. The mushrooming growth of datasets is interesting. It used to be claimed that if you sat a thousand monkeys at a thousand typewriters eventually they would produce the works of Shakespeare. Well it's taken the Internet to prove that wrong.

It's customary on these occasions to attempt one or two serious words on the conference theme. I spoke at this conference twelve years ago, when it was last in Edinburgh. And I thought I

might just reflect on where the world was twelve years ago, where it is now and where we might be in twelve years time when you may return again. The point behind this that I want to make is that much of what changes is superficial and that our core competencies and professional values may need refreshed but they do not necessarily need changed.

Where was the world in 1993

- We had just had the first Attack on the World Trade Centre
- Israel and PLO signed a Peace Accord
- Bill Clinton was inaugurated as President of whom we all had great hopes
- Two of my heroes died, Frank Zappa of the band Mothers of Invention and Northcote Parkinson of Parkinson's Law
- Madonna discovers SEX with her first book
- Scotland had just failed to qualify for the 1994 World Cup (Not to be confused with the World Series, although we never qualify for that either - but then neither does England so it's ok). Oh and Ally McCoist was in the Team.

- The Single European Market was created and the Maastricht Treaty signed
- US planes bombed Iraqi troops

Where was technology was in 1993

- 691,000 desktops were sold worldwide
- The luggable was in vogue - remember those Amstrads
- First Personal Digital Assistant was released - the Apple Newton
- NCSA Mosaic released as first web browser
- Gopher and CWIS were the technologies of choice
- And as those from the UK will remember the Follett Report was published, recommending amongst other things a big growth in national data centres and services. From that grew the much prized EDINA and all the good things that have flowed from that, even if Peter is to Trappist Monks what Tony Blair is to truth

Where the library profession was in 1993 can be illustrated by a question from the University of Kentucky Library School Final Exam:

“Recently the profession has been hearing and seeing a great deal about the emerging “information superhighway”. Define the information superhighway” and discuss how libraries, and library patrons, might use the information superhighway to improve access to information.”

So after twelve years of huge change, where is the world today?

- Well a lot of wrangling goes on over rebuilding the World Trade Centre

- Israel and PLO are as near peace as ever

- George Dubya Bush was inaugurated for a second term and Bill Clinton is now looked back on nostalgically

- Two more of my heroes died this year. Billy Smart Jr. who reinvented circuses after world war 2 and Arthur Miller - not because he was a towering intellectual who wrote Death of a Salesman but because he gave hope to nerds everywhere by showing that even nerds could aspire to marry women like Marilyn Monroe.

- Scotland are about to fail to qualify for the 2006 World Cup and Ally McCoist is now an Assistant Manager of the national team - and we still haven't made the World Series
- Madonna is now writing children's books - and like many authors we find the sequel disappointing. Sex was better than children
- Europe has now expanded to include the transition states
- Iraqis are bombing US troops in Iraq

Where technology is today - sort-of

- Ubiquitous computing
- Convergence of phone, PDA and laptop
- More microchips than people
- The two billionth desktop sold in 2003
- Streaming video
- E-Science and grid computing

Which is a long winded way of saying more and faster

Where we are now professionally

- Hybrid libraries with all sorts of media
- Another Follett report has set up a Research Libraries Network

- Google has redefined searching and the satisfied inept
- Struggling with redefinition of scholarly communication
- “Computers still don’t bloody work” *Gill Hamilton of NLS*

Where technology might be in 2017

- Wearable computing
- A computer still costs £1000 but has 10000 times the power
- We still use it for word processing
- All students own ubiquitous machines

Where we might be in 2017

- Retired
- Raise a cluster of things I hope will have been resolved in one of those areas which I care passionately about but so far have failed to persuade the world I am right
- E-research collections of the future
- OAI servers and recognition as producers of information not just consumers
- Digital research collections expanded at institutional level.
- University IPR managers

- **Trusted repositories**

Which brings me right back to my theme of refreshing core competencies

Trusted repositories: the five Maori tests

- Receive the information with accuracy
- Store the information with integrity beyond doubt
- Retrieve the information without amendment
- Apply appropriate judgement in the use of the information
- Pass the information on appropriately

And how do we get there?

- Grown up thinking
- Joined up networks
- Seamless Martini education
- A profession at ease with a knowledge society

So finally, on your theme of evidence and enlightenment, David Hume said: "Truth springs from argument amongst friends. " I

hope this conference is engendering lots of arguments - but always among friends.

And so to conclude. Before I came over here this evening I telephoned Alcoholics Anonymous. "Do you want to join?" they asked. "NO, I said, I want to resign". Now that I've finished, I hope that you, like me, will go on to enjoy the rest of the evening well but not wisely. Can I then commiserate in advance with those of you who will rise tomorrow thinking "never again" while reading those immortal words "Armitage Shanks".